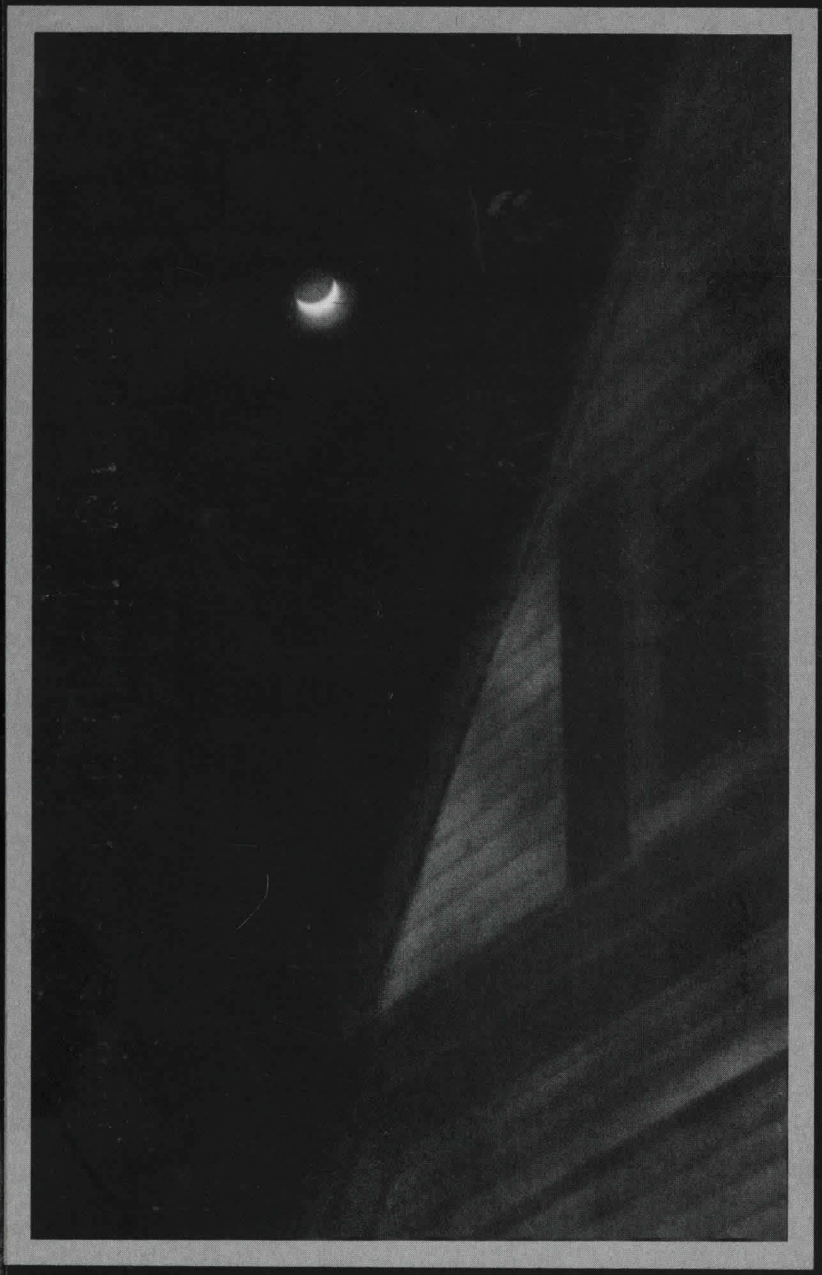

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The Rise and Fall

Caught in our cement and glass worlds, we thrive on linearity. Yet there is a rhythm, a waxing and waning, a dying and rebirth. The myth of the phoenix is the story of death within flames and rebirth from ashes. The moon follows a similar cyclical life line. Suspended over our all too realistic selves, the moon is reborn monthly. Its cycles are symbolic of the cycles of our lives. Sorrow follows joy, joy follows sorrow, the waxing and waning. Yet there is always a fullness, a mystery as plain as night, as visible as the moon looming over our all too realistic minds.

-Bushra Rehman

5/16/95 draft

Waxing Moon

Solomon's Pride by Andrea Dobrich

"Thy light can visionary thoughts impart,
And lead the muse to soothe a suffering heart."

-Helen Maria Williams

Awake

Awake my brothers and sisters
Let us stop making promises and
Try and fulfill our dreams
Towards and Educational goal.

Let us stop wasting time and
Get our lives together
Because the morning will soon be over.

Let us arise and take our first step to our future
Now is the time because time is too short to
Waste; it is valuable
Time goes and never returns
Time waits for no man.

This is our chance to wear the cap and gown and fulfill
All our dreams before it is too late.

Awake my brothers and sisters.

by Esther Matthew

Religious Roots By Andrea Dobrich

In Time

We met as strangers,
I love you as a friend.
Look into these eyes, they
burn with fire and guilt.
One me, one you
one touch, one kiss...
I've missed you...
Please come to me when
you're aching with hunger.
I'll make time for you,
I'll caress you between hours,
kiss you between minutes and
hold you between seconds.
Just give me the time of day
and I'll give you the world...
Come to me, I'll be waiting,
I'll meet you in the back...

by Lyvett Velazquez

Turtle's Disease

There was heaviness, the heaviness of warm breasts milked; the fall of clouded fluid puckering the gray page of her mind. Fetus, moist within womb-soil, uncurling beside bellied tidal pools; a shelled tortoise cradled within the curve of her spine.

Shuttering, shuttering her eyes, her body a container of all she had gathered when emerging from her own mother's amniotic ocean. Now, within her own body the touch of starfish, roughened fingertips crawling across the Brailled floor, whispering one to another the history of the umbilicus.

The history of the umbilicus: Genesis upon the throw rug, green furred. His face, her legs, their movements orange-tinted by the street lamps shedding their light . . .

Afterwards, their breathing had faded to an accustomed rhythm which neither startled nor excited. She had lain, attempting to understand the nature of what had just occurred. The effort was fruitless. Orgasm amnesia had set in. There was nothing but a sense of being enveloped by orange light, the remembrance of a space in time, an image tattered about the edges.

Perhaps, she had thought, orgasms were simply paychecks from God, compensation for putting forth the physical effort necessary for continued creation. An infinitely minute fraction of what God had felt in the throes of creation. She had begun to understand that she, and he, and all that had ever existed were nothing more than the end result of God's nymphomania.

The Big Bang theory unfolded within her mind, as the fetus lay, moist within clouded fluid, uncurling beside bellied tidal pools; a shelled tortoise cradled within the curve of her spine.

by Bushra Rehman

Excerpts From the Diary of a Rapunzel in the '90s

So here I am,
locked in this cold, damp, empty tower
twiddling my thumbs.
I ask myself a million times a day,
why do you wait for some stupid jerk to rescue you
who will more than likely expect undying gratitude
for the single humane act he will make in his entire life?
Rescuing princesses is not exactly a respectable job for princes
these days.
There isn't enough brag power in it.
Men want all control or nothing at all.
That's how I put myself in this damn place anyhow.
Why trade one prison for another?

So I struggle.
I want to bust myself out of here, start anew,
write flowery love stuff about the male reflection I have
found to be my eternal soul mate
but,
I just don't think it's gonna happen.
I mean, statistics prove it.
3 out of 5 eternal soul mates
end up in splitsville
and who wants to deal with that?
It's bad enough for a person to realize
that no matter what,
loneliness will always follow.
I just don't see the point in princes anymore.

It's only about 30 stories high.
If I jump, I die.
If I don't, I will eventually anyway.
The options aren't exactly plentiful.
My hair will grow out
and then what?

I'll tie it around the window bars to die slightly more painfully
as every hair is ripped out of my head as I plunge to my death
bald.
It's not like I can call a self-help group for women locked
into cages because Caliban didn't give me a phone.
All he gave me was this lip-liner that I write with so I can
"look pretty."
This is my way of saying, "If you don't see it without the
lip-liner, then why do you want me anyway?"

I guess you could say that I'm bitter.
Why shouldn't I be?
I know I did this to myself and that's the hardest part.
Accepting, forgiving, trusting
time and time again eventually led
Caliban to believe that I was his,
and when I thought I could leave,
he locked me up.
He thinks I'll never get away.
The funny part is that I've actually convinced him
that I like it here!
It's safer that way.
There's no more fingers being shoved in my face,
harsh, frighteningly loud words being pounded through my head
about what I did or didn't
should or shouldn't do.
I traded all that for this
cold, empty silence.
And it actually feels good.

Getting back to the hair issue.
I think I will grow it out.
But not for me, for him.
I will seduce him one night
when he brings me my dinner.
I'll sense his mood,
look up from under my eyelashes at him,

and let it all fall around me.
Then he'll try to take me
and, as I reach for his butt,
(which by the way used to be in much better shape)
grab the keys from his back pocket and lock him up!
Reversal of roles.
Ahh, the irony.
Then it will be his turn to literally feel silence.
After a couple of days,
I'll call the cops and then he'll be their problem.
As much as I resent him, I couldn't let him stay in here
for more than a few days.
I would not wish this prison on anyone.

Diary,
you're probably wondering just
what is really going on.
I'll tell you, but it will take time.
I loved Caliban once
but it was before I knew of all his Calibanities.
I trusted him not to knock me down,
step on my heart, then make me apologize for it.
But that is exactly what happened.
I believed in myself and him.
Then, all of sudden, all I believed in was him.
I lost all of my self love, and I can't tell you how much that
really sucks.
I didn't know where I was going
and I didn't care.
Now that I do, I sometimes wonder if it's too late.
Although I don't believe in equal coupledom
or flowery words anymore,
(that's all just fairy tales about submissive women, and I refuse
to be that now. Act-yes, be-no.)
I will never, however,
lose faith in happily ever after.
I will be that.

I will.

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
I want the happily ever after.
I need it soon.
I will have it.
Even if I die attempting to get it,
at least I'll know I tried.
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
He's coming,
get ready.
Get out of here.
Do it now.
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Oh, God, please let me do this.
I want to see the sun
just one more.
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
The fire is in my heart
Oh, God, please let me feel
one more gentle kiss
without my heart breaking after.
PLEASE
Just one more.
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
God, help me get out of here,
I swear, I'll plant the flowers myself
and I won't expect
or regret anymore.
PLEASE God
PLEASE
Is that him on the stairs?
. . .
He's gone.
I'll try again tomorrow.

by Laurie Trombley

Full Moon

"No sun art thou that blinds
and that inspires,
And bleeding ends a life in fires.
Thou art what is the ailing
singer his poem,
distant, but oh! the mild, mild
light of home."

-Annette Elizabeth
von Droste Holstoff

Feathers, Common and Uncommon

Some act as if they had forever,
to shape their lives and do whatever,
to sing their song and tie their tether.
Each day growing like a chicken feather.
We act as if we had forever.

Some act as if they had the time,
to sit around and guard the rhyme
which measures lives. Ignore the shrine!
(forget it is a deeper sign)
We act as if we had the time.

Some act as if they will not age.
Every opening creates another cage.
Every day, another empty page.
Every room, another stage.
We act as if we will not age.

Some act as though the world might end.
"How can some dare to pretend?"
(There will be letters we'll never send)
Maybe tomorrow is our furthest friend.
We act as though the world might end.

Some act because they have forever.
Minutes present a fresh endeavor,
A new disguise to make them clever.
Each day grows a peacock feather.
Some act because they have forever.

by Tammy Rose

Puppy Love

Fragrant, the sweetness tickles my nose
and reminds me that I live- as alive as
the grass I lay on.
I look over-frowning at him.
Running, laughing, joining his yelps
with old Scaps, right at his heel.
My frown deepens at the thought of my trampled grass,
my tranquillity disturbed.
I look over to our eldest brother. Still
quiet besides me, his eyes dancing along
with him and the dog that shared his
childhood too.
I fight to keep my brow furrowed.
Look from him to the oldest. I think of us three.
Almost grown, I stay deep in quiet reflection.
I no longer feel the urge to scramble up trees,
though they sometimes call to me.
I never see the eldest return covered with mud or
grass under his collar . . .
My peace is always disturbed by his shrieks of laughter
or his shameless teary-eyed wails.
The sound of him carries well, his voice not
yet rich in timbre.
I look at the Elder, as we call him. My frown fades.
He reaches for me. The joy on his face
mirroring the little one.
As we roll in the grass, my poor trampled grass,
high pitched laughter and little hands
join us. Old Scaps loves us all.

by Oni Pendarvis

In Just (in the style of e. e. cummings)

In Just-
Spring, when the farmyard is wet and gooey.
We trampled ankle high
through the
Pools of brown water
And watched the chickens
scatter
at
our feet.
Spring, when the world is hide and
seek go merrily.
Away you go -- hurry!
Counting to a hundred is quick.

A r o u n d t h e b a r n d o o r ?
You're not there.
Where have you gone, playmate?
I see you!
A set of squirming pink toes
Oozing through
the cracked corn
and the sticky mud.
Itagyoubeforeyoucanmove!
Then you close your eyes so I
... can run.....

But quick! We have to hide from
The Game Spoiler
before She sees
our splattered over-
alls and makes us
all
come out
of the
rain!

by Rebecca Anderson

Seasons of You

Cold Winters
Soft furry slippers
Cozy fires
and You

Warm Springs
Easter lillies
Billowy blue skies
and You

Hot fun-filled Summers
Light airy clothing
White sandy beaches
and You

Fall colors
Falling leaves
Big orange pumpkins
and You

Every Day
Every Way
Every Season

Me Loving You

by Dianne Robinson

Passion Dance

the trunk is not a trunk
they are legs
the limbs, twisted and knotted
are not limbs
they are arms
stretching to each other
the tree is not a tree
it is a couple
swaying, dancing
laughing, loving
oblivious to the stares
swept up in the obsession
in the desire that is theirs
nothing else is real
except the intertwined limbs
swaying trunk
upturned leaves
locked in the emotions
of love ever more

by Katherine Williams

Dancing Woman by Bushra Rehman

Simplicity by Meghan Gilroy

Picture This . . .

An autumn night
a gentle breeze
the sound of wind chimes as you enter a room . . .
i look away:
i could almost feel you watching me with those woman eyes.

The sway of curtains
the rustle of leaves
the sound of crickets thundering against the sky . . .
and we run out of things to say to each other.

The books we read
the music we listen to
photos of our loved ones
the places we've been
helping fill the gap of silence between us.
When you touched me
i closed my eyes and let it happen.

Afterwards
we lie awake
telling & retelling our lives
until dawn
the brightness of a morning star
the blue of the sky reflected in a mirror
a kaleidoscope of Morning Glories captured in a crystal vase
flocks of birds
fill the air
migrating south for the winter
and i am lost in a stare . . .
You ask me what it is i am thinking
and i say to you
i dream too much.

by Samuel Robertson

Part of a Story . . . Part of a Dream

If you go down by Sunshine Lane,
be sure to ask the Moon why she calls to me at night.
Her beams echo a spiritual drumming
that coincides with my heartbeat
and I am truly very overwhelmed.

The ancestors have told me
one is chosen to hear the call
follow the drum and remember its meaning.

But how can I do this if I can't get any sleep?

I am curious to know if she has any answers for me
Please let her know of my urgency
I have tried to talk to her
but she acts like she doesn't hear me
and I always wind up
talking to her brother, Sun.
He cannot help me because he
well
that is another story.

If you happen to see the Moon,
please echo my concerns.
She and I have been quite social
since before the great Kings of Africa and Pharaohs in Kemet.
Perhaps she's busy or
maybe even upset with me . . .

But,
if you happen to go down by Sunshine Lane
please ask the Moon
if she must call to me at night
to please be a little more subtle
so that I can at least doze.

by Paula Pryce

UNTITLED

The moon danced over the mushroom tree. The shadows rushed out. In haste, they danced among the falling leaves. In fistfuls, they tore at the ground, making quick little huts with burning lights to keep their shadowy forms free from the fear of fading. The precious newborns knew even yet that as the moon disappears their moment is ended. The moon mother passed quietly behind the clouds hiding playfully before their young minds could learn that the moon mother returns. The shadows, bereft, returned as swirling dust motes, to the earth.

As sights before the moon have past
Love is dreams which do not last.

by Melissa Varnavas

Untitled by Maris Hampton

The Dream

She laid exposed to her lover
As satin sheets caressed her body

Behind the bed was an open window
Through it was a picture perfect summer's day

She was content in her position
As the summer breeze brushed,
brushed over her skin

Her companion reveled in the excitement
of her presence
He could not help but to take little bites
of her

Each bite she purred and stretched;
as cats do when happy
He turned her over to taste the fullness
of her lips

Disturbed by his efforts to come closer
She opened her eyes and realized it was
her spouse
He had been desperately trying to wake her
For another ordinary work day must begin

She arises from her cotton sheets
She climbs out of her flannel PJ's
and into a reality checked shower
Regretting and missing the dream

by Renee Blackwell

Comfortable Memories by Meghan Gilroy

TALE OF ENDEARMENT

A TWINE OF RAPTURE
A WISP OF fLAME
A WHIff Of REfRESHMENT THAT NEVER DELAYS
A TASTE OF HONEY fOR LIPS SO PRECIOUS
THE TOUCH OF A PEACH fOR A TONGUE SO SWEET
MY BREAST WHICH MOUNDS
MY HEART THAT POUNDS
WITH LIPS THAT STEAM
MY EYES THAT GLEAM
A fEELING OF WARMTH WHEN EMBRACED IN LOVING ARMS
A fEELING OF SAfETY
A GUARD AGAINST HARM
THE STRENGTH Of AN ARMY
THE HEART Of A RAM
THE BRACE Of A TIGER
THE CONTOURS Of A MAN
THE ESSENCE Of A LAMB
WITH THOUGHTS Of A BABY SHEEP
THE SOUL Of A LION
SPLENDID MEMORIES HAVE COME COMPLETE

by Morenike Clarke

Humble Sunrise

Listen to your heart
and follow the dove
fly far, far away
reach up to the sky
burst through the clouds
like a brilliant sun ray
there is a hole in my life
your absence has not been filled
but in my dreams
you tell me to
listen to my heart
and follow the dove
as your soul flies
at last painlessly away
Good bye, my Baby

by Katherine Williams

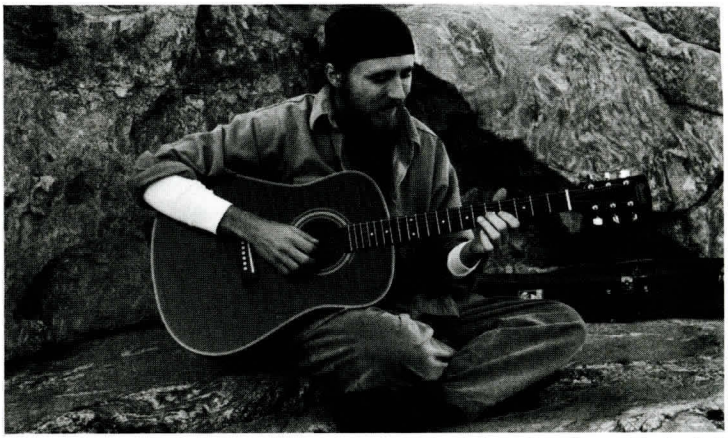
Retreat by Deirdre Sweeney

Faithfully

It's like when you hear a song
And you can't get it out of you head.
The thoughts run over and over again
Until they're exhausted and dead.
But the subject is exhausted only to others;
It's alive and screaming in you.
You're sick and tired of the constant thoughts,
And surely, they're sick of you too.
Yet you can't get rid of the thoughts;
You'd miss them if they were to go.
They pull at your sanity every day.
You've lost all else— it's all that you know.
Every so often, the thoughts become a face.
But it's usually forgotten in the rush.
It's only the thoughts that matter now,
And the memories of that original, sinful crush.
Was it a smile, or a subtle touch
That drove you straight to the edge?
It's as if your mind and life are stuck,
And you, yourself, are the wedge.
Your yearnful dreams have become twisted plots;
You've lost all perspective of what is real.
You're consumed now by unrequited desire,
And have forgotten what it's like to feel
It helps to be distracted,
But the thoughts never seem to wane.
You try to forget and go on with reality,
For you know there is nothing to gain.
Still though, the thoughts plague your mind,

And a certain name is at the head of the parade.
You reflect on the sorted and colorful confetti of memories,
And marvel at the collage your brain has made.
They say life goes on,
So why is it that you're always so sad?
It's like the song that plays over and over,
Reminding you of what you almost, but never truly had.
Only now, the repeated song has become a repeated thought,
And the needle has been caught by a tear.
An enormous scratch in your life,
Too huge and painful to try and repair.
So, your record is scratched,
And like the needle, your mind can't seem to move.
You're forever trapped in a single set of thoughts,
Forever spinning in the same groove.
So settle back and accept your life
For on this is what you must depend—
A song with a beautiful beginning,
But a song that is never to end.

by Rebecca Anderson



Untitled by Andrea Dobrich

People

"Hello, is James Lancaster there, please?"
"Who wants to know?"
"This is Gail from Dr. Marsh's office. Is James Lancaster there, sir?"
"No."
Click.

"Hello, is James Lancaster there, please?"
"Sugar, he hasn't been here for a couple a days."
"Do you know if he is planning on making his appointment tomorrow with Dr. Marsh?"
"Oh, Sugar, he's got a mind o' his own, that Jimmy boy does. Maybe you should try again later. Bye, now, Sugar."
"Bye."
Click.

"Hello, is James Lancaster there, please?"
"Who?"
"James Lancaster, sir?"
"Nope, no, he ain't here."
"Sir, are you all right?"
"Fine, just fine. He ain't here."
"Do you know him?"
"No. Don't know him."
"Thank you, sir."
Click.

"Hello, is James Lancaster there, please?
"No, I think you have the wrong number, Ma'am."
"Is this 752-8537?"

"Yes, Ma'am, but he isn't here. Maybe my mom can help you when she gets back from the store."

"Thank you, young man, but that won't be necessary. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Ma'am."

Click.

"Gail, have you gotten a hold of Mr. Lancaster?"

"No, doctor. He doesn't seem to be there."

"Try a different approach to contact him. It might work."

"All right, doctor."

"Hi, is Jimmy there?"

"This is Jimmy."

"Jimmy, I'm calling from Dr. Marsh's office. I just wanted to remind you that your first meeting with him is tomorrow."

"Okay."

"Do you have any questions, Jimmy?"

"Will it hurt?"

"Will what hurt?"

"Getting rid of them?"

"No, Jimmy, it won't hurt getting rid of them."

"Good, I don't like painful things."

"I'll see you tomorrow, Jimmy?"

"Yes. I'll be there..."

"Good-bye, Jimmy."

Click.

"We'll be there..."

by Jeannine Nault

Overcoming

The rain pounds against the earth which laps up its unrelenting offering...

To what do I owe this treasured storm but forgiving droplets in puddles of wonderous memories? A smile like a gentle breeze and laughter like the soothing waves in the ocean of serenity.

'Twas but a glimmer in time that was shared. A spectacular event that showered me in glorious delight.

All these things brush my minds canvas at a point when this storm is raging...

I have been much too dependent upon the atmosphere.
Now, I must make my own forecasts...and I will.

'Twas but a glimmer in time that was shared. It was a spectacular event that enveloped me in happiness.

Finally, I am becoming what I've always strived to become... the better woman, the calm after the storm...the rainbow.

by Paula Pryce

Untitled by Maris Hampton

Waning Moon

Bible Belt by Andrea Dobrich

"Secure yourself to heaven
Hold on tight the night has come
Fasten up your earthly burdens
You have just begun."

-Amy Ray, Indigo Girls

Liar

Quiet and still, darkness everywhere
inside voices are shaking
screaming not allowed

Why not go your way
I am only desperate too long
it is not your problem anyway
just my own personal disaster
by mistake you found

Oh, do not try
you know where I will send you
this sweetly prolonged hell
is only what I've asked for

So glad that you have left
deep enough the hole is
not to reach me
I say I do not need you, only
a sudden craving came my way.

by Andrea Mihalovic

Untitled by Maris Hampton

Ebony Orchid

Fragile child on rainbow's slide
her feelings caught in winters tide.
Water trickles through her veins
she's lost all hope, now she's insane.

As people dance on disco floors,
she lies rotting to her core.
In places where there are no names
death entangles her forest mane.

The rainbow's black and has no shine
for now like her it's lost in time.
She's pale amongst the darkest night
Left all alone, she's lost her fight.

Receding to the underground
she dresses in an ebony gown.
The faintest sigh comes from her lips
as she now enters the fiery crypt.

by Paula Pryce

Untitled by Andrea Dobrich

Commutaken

Stealing a page from my notebook
to commemorate daily life.
Catching up on sleepless nights,
the newspaper dreams of a commuter.
Every morning, exactly at 7:52,
the train disgorges the mindful masses,
huddled, yearning to breathe clean.
Courage to jump into the swarming river of persons
Passengers seeking passage no more.
Only rushing to wait for the next train.

Staring at the week-old nail polish
And a hand that reminds me of
a friend from high school,
(In a few hours, lunch will be:
"sardines packed in like people")
Mass migration of the robots,
and the release into the larger jungle.

Repeat backward.
Violins playing in background as
missionaries are sent to convert
the money worshippers.
Fluorescent twinkles in the stationary night
which, like too many other things,
have stolen away the day.

by Tammy Rose

Terminal Stillness by Andrea Dobrich

The Confession

No sense of time
going somewhere I do not want
to be
so high, only
images of others pass
eyes keep closing but, the hand moves
slowly
I am not your lover
nor am I your friend
only an illusion
part of your confusion
so get out of
my head

You will be forgotten
as years go by
you want something
I will not provide
only because
you have taken over me
and I refuse
so your body will
escape my mind
if I order it

Do not touch me
you are a temptation
but
I know I will begin to
hate you
as soon as I will get you
inside my soul
damn it, can't you go?

You are not what I need
so
get out of my bed
help me say no
I promise to destroy you
that is all I know
you are an entertainment
not for too long

by Andrea Mihalovic

Far

Characters: Voice, Star, Water, Rock, and Leaf
Scene: Night. A woman sits upon gray rocks, half-washed by the rising waters. A leaf floats on the surface.

Voice: I'm far, I'm far, I'm far.
Star: Hmmm. . .
Voice: I'm faaa . . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Voice: I'm far, I have traveled under the shadow of the crow's wing blue-tinged. I have traveled yet I am faaa. . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Leaf: I float with wave curls descending, my back to chill surface, my belly to flat air.
Star: Hmmm. . .
Leaf: I floaaa . . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub . . .
Leaf: She has traveled far, swollen feet sandaled, prickly toes upon clogged rocks. Still, still, I float, my limbs curl with the wave.
Voice: My limbs, my limbs, stalks heavied with mourning dew, my veins roped with the twisted tongues of my mothers, I drown, I drowww. . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Rock: I'm heavy, heavy as the pockmarked moon fallen to the soiled earth.
Star: Hmmm. . .
Rock: I'm heavvv . . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Rock: She's heavy, rain eyes shuttering, shuttering with fingers. Still, still I'm heavy, my fingernails crack the dawning.
Voice: My fingers bloodied with the souls who birthed me. My voice drowned beneath the twisted tongues of my mothers, I drown, drowww. . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Star: Hmmm. . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Star: Hmmm. . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Voice: I drown to the undulating beneath.
Leaf: I float upon the pollen surfacing.
Voice: I'm far, I'm far, far, far, my twisted tongues . . .
Rock: I'm heavy, heavy, my clogged mind aches, aches . . .
Voice: I drown . . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Leaf: to the undulating . . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Rock: beneath. . .
Water: Glub, glub, glub.
Voice: Glub, glub, glub . . . by Bushra Rehman

He Loves Me

"Is it my hair, the color of my eyes, am I too fat, are my feet too big, did I not do everything he asked of me?" I sit and think of him constantly, and what I did that has caused him not to call me for eight days.

Every hour I check the phone line to make sure there's is a dial tone. I haven't gone out since Michael called me last. How can I go outside? What if he calls me?

"Ring, ring!" Oh, God, the phone is finally ringing. My adrenaline starts pumping immediately. My heart beats faster and louder. It beats so loud, can hear it. As I bend to answer the phone, a smile comes across my face. I frown when I realize the voice is not Michael's. I make the conversation as short as possible. It is my co-worker, Renee. She has phoned to tell me that if I don't report in sometime today I will be fired. Do you think I care?

In the happiest voice I can conjure up, I say, "Oh, I'll call in later." Renee wants to talk, but I can't talk with anyone, because talking and listening will cloud my thoughts about Michael. I can't concentrate on two things at one time.

I guess I'm too quiet. She finally says, "What's wrong with you?"

I respond, "Nothing, oh nothing, I guess this cold has got me down. Well, let me go, I'm going back to bed." I abruptly replace the receiver without waiting for her good-bye.

Tears run down my face like the water that runs from the faucet. I cry uncontrollably. My head is hurting so bad I feel as if someone has hit me with a sledge hammer. I run to the bathroom to take two aspirins.

I stumble from the bathroom and fall upon my bed. I must have fallen asleep; I am suddenly awakened by the ringing of the phone. I groggily answer, "Hello." I recognize the voice as Michael's. I bolt up in bed. A smile crosses my lips. My headache has gone away.

Although I am hurt and angry because he has waited so long to call, my lips cannot move to speak my anger. For some reason, I cannot speak to him in anger. I cannot shout at him, "Why haven't you called me?"

As he speaks, I hang on every word. The conversation is not important. What is important is what he says before he hangs up. He says, "I'll be by later, and oh yeah, Robin, I LOVE YOU."

I replace the receiver and run to the bathroom to shower and prepare for Michael's visit.

As I step into the shower, all I can think is, "HE LOVES ME."

by Michele Lee Heung

Abandoned by Meghan Gilroy

UNTITLED

Roach: Night 1

I guess it was the sound of dishes breaking more than the screaming that aroused me from my slumber. I heard the gruff voice shouting strings of spiritual prayer and profanity while the rhythmic beat of fist against flesh kept grisly time. The greasy, burly man whom I had often seen raiding the refrigerator at night, had gripped the locks of a thin, wiry boy who shared the house with him, and was repeatedly slamming his head against the oak table upon which they ate. What horrified me the most was the sight of all that red spreading ever outward every time the boy's face impacted with the wood. Every time he smashed the child's head, he would get a sharp tone to his voice.

"I told you what would happen if you started leaving crumb on the ground, didn't I!" screamed the man. "The money is coming from your pocket, boy. And maybe next time you'll see FIT TO MIND ME!"

The last four words were timed to the final slamming of the boy's face. Finally, the grip slackened and the boy fell stunned to the ground where he lay covered in this red liquid.

Looking around him, the man said, "And you better have this mess cleaned up by the morning, else you's in for a another whippin'." He then turned and shuffled off up the stairs.

For a long time, I sat and watched the boy lying so still I thought he might have been killed. Then, with a long, sorrowful moan, he dragged himself to his feet and over to the sink, where cold water cascaded into his cupped palm and over his battered features. The dog had finally stopped barking and I settled in to watch the boy scrub up the red stuff with shaking hands.

Rusty: Same Night

Frank beat the boy again. I knows it like I knows I cain't help 'im. Ev'ry time 'e goes to give dat boy a whippin' I'm left tied out here so's I doesn't interfere nuthin'. Shore wish Margret wuz still 'ere. Frank ain't never so much as lay a finger on dat boy whilst she wuz 'round. Ev'rythin' wuz great 'til the day the men came and put her in dat car. After they put Margret in that truck I never suh 'er again. Dat's when ev'rythin' chang'd 'round here. Frank started drinkin' and readin' the bible for hours and hours. It wuz 'bout a week after dey took Margret away dat Frank first 'it Reb. I 'member

Reb wuz sittin' on the lawn playin' with sum ants when Frank cum home from work. 'E got out an' stormed right over to dat boy wit' the Bible swingin' in his hand. 'E stood in front of Reb 'til the boy look'd up. Den, wit' such a look of hate dat his eyes wuz burnin', Frank kicked Reb in the ribs. The boy flew back and rolled 'round in the grass. I got ril'd up and charg'd at Frank. I sunk muh teeth into his pants leg and pulled. Den 'e kicked muh away and 'it muh with his briefcase. I wuz too dizzy to move as he walked over to the boy and dragged him into the house kickin' 'n' screamin'. I wuz bleedin' fer awhile 'til Bobby Cobler rode by and stopped to pet me. When he seen I wuz bleedin' he ran to the house to git help. Frank didn't cum to the door, so's Bobby went to the Taylor's next door and Miss Ann patched muh up. The next time I saw the boy, he cum out of the house three days later with a bowl of food for me. Reb set muh bowl down. Under one of his eyes, which wuz half shut, wuz this black mark. Af'er Reb 'pol'gized fer Frank's whippin' muh, he went to fetch muh water.

We thought the beatin's would stop in time, but dey never did. Fer a time muh 'n' the boy thought of runnin' sumwh'res so's Frank wud never find us. Never ran though. Reb wuz never stron' 'nough to leave and I stays to give the boy a lil' comfort. Not many people cum by. Mostly men to see Frank. Lately, the whippin's 'ave been real bad. Mebee, cuz Frank knows the day's comin' when he won't be able to whip Reb no more. The other day, Frank smashed Reb's arm cuz Reb hadn't cleaned the kitchen and Frank had seen a roach. Frank 'n' Reb both went out dis mornin' leavin' muh tied to muh house. They both cum back 'round midnight and weren't in the house a second when Frank start'd whuppin' him 'gain.

Roach: The next morning

I saw the boy the next day in the kitchen. From the swelling of the nose and the large red bruise that covered his face, I judged this to be the one who had been beaten the night before. He was crying a little and shaking his head as he walked over to the shelf and picked up a box. He poured its contents into a bowl and poured some white liquid over it. The boy started eating when there came a scratching at the door. Reb looked up and a tiny grin appeared on his cracked lips. "Hey, Rusty," he whispered as he let in a large, brown dog.

He walked across the spotless kitchen and started to leave when he stopped and looked at his unfinished bowl of cereal. Turning back, he took three large spoonfuls and dumped the rest into the sink. The boy and dog trotted upstairs. I busied myself looking for other bitsof food here and there, but the boy had done a marvelous job cleaning the room. I found nothing edible. I made my way across the countertop and down the side nearest the doorway to the living room. I was hoping that the man may have left some crumbs lying in the thick carpeting. I had just gotten inside a shadowy patch when I heard a door bang open upstairs. There were shouts and a yelp. Suddenly, I saw the dog flying down the steps, racing for the kitchen. Hot on his heels was the man who had beaten the boy. A slender shiny stick was poised in his hand with a white circle at the end. The boy ran behind the of them and caught the man halfway across the kitchen. The dog had slammed against the unlocked screen door and disappeared from my sight.

"No!" yelled the boy as the stick was raised above the man's head. To me it sounded more like a command than anything else.

"Bring that mutt in 'ere, will you!" yelled the man as he lunged.

His reflexes were slow from his beating last night, but the boy managed to avoid the swipe. Another step back moved him out of range of the back swing. The stick was thrown in the haste after him, but missed as the boy ducked around the corner. I swore a smile was on his lips when he had darted past me. The man stormed after him yelling about what he was going to do when he caught him. I got to the doorway in time to see the boy trip on the top of the stairs. He picked himself up, just out of reach of the man's hands and disappeared from my sight. A door slammed upstairs and I heard the man banging his fist upon it. I moved into the living room, trudging over the thick carpet in search of food. There was a crash from upstairs and I heard the sound of running water and muffled screaming.

Rusty: The following day

I wish'd I could 'elp dat boy. He'll be out 'ere a might soon to feed me. Maybe t'day's the day we'ze c'n run 'way from this place. Reb says 'e's got it all plann'd and I b'lieved him. What wuz dat noise I heard cumin' from the kitchen? 'Up, Reb's callin' me. 'E has dis pack on his back. All righ' boy, t'day's the day alrigh'. Le's go now. B'fore he wakes up an' fin's us gone or b'fore you 'n' me

change our min's. So long Frank, you bastard.

Roach: One week later

The last time I saw the boy was last Thursday. The boy came into the kitchen completely dressed. He poured himself a bowl of cereal and sat down before it. He had placed a knapsack on the floor by the door and seemed to be waiting for something. The older man came downstairs about twenty minutes later, Reb was on his third bowl by then. The man sat down in his chair and looked across at the boy. Paper spread before him, the man blocked Reb from view. The boy put his spoon down and got up from the table. Without looking up, the man told the boy he had better wash out that bowl before he got what was coming to him. The boy stopped in his tracks, his hand sinking into his jacket.

"Now you get that jacket off your back 'cause you ain't goin' nowhere. Until you learn to keep a clean house, you're grounded," started the man. "Just like a bastard to kill his mother and expect Daddy to take good care of him like..."

I suppose that is what finally made the boy snap. His mother had been killed and, if I were to believe the man, the boy was responsible. The boy spun, an oddly shaped object in his right hand, and faced the man. He screamed "NO!" and his hand tightened into a fist. There was a bright light at the end of the object, followed by a sound of thunder. For a second I could see through the man and his paper. He flew back in his chair, smashing into the kitchen floor. Red stuff, much more than that which had come from the boy on any occasion, spread across the floor. The man's eyes were wide open and a look of surprise was stamped on his face. He did not move. The boy looked stunned for a moment, his entire body quivering as if he were about to melt, he dropped the thundermaker to the ground. The dog was silent. The boy grabbed a sack and burst from the house without looking back. I have not seen the boy since.

A lot of unknown faces have been by since then. Most of them wearing caps and the same clothes. There were a lot of flashing lights and the man's unmoving body was finally moved from the house. This all happened the day before yesterday when some boy came by to the house and saw the man. I think I understand death now, but more importantly I think I understand Reb.

by Cedric Esters

Waning Returns To Waxing

Through the Eyes of a Child by Andrea Dobrich

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moon,
wi' the auld moon in his arms."

-Anon, Sir. Patrick Spence

Struggles

I do not like pens
which scratch across the paper.
...Ink gliding along the page
as lubricant between the instruments
and the emotions.
I do not like words
which stumble out of one's mouth
like a persuant drunkard
or an 18 month old between its parents.
I do not like thoughts
which jumble over each other
(like a nightmare)
the living, arising from the carcasses
Fighting for LIFE.
I do like the children of the process.
<<<<<<<maybe not always well behaved>>>>>>>
but the good ones are always independant
And may continue the struggles
...but on their own.

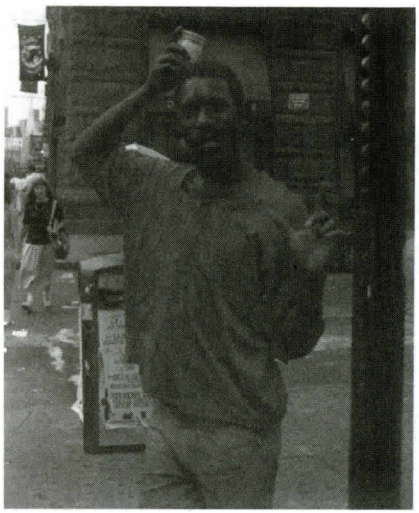
by Tammy Rose

Dolphin Boy by Andrea Dobrich

Yesterday's Tomorrow

People of color
existing
amongst the concrete ruins of yesterday's tomorrow
echoes of fire hoses,
dogs
billy clubs and footsteps
what really happens to a dream deferred?
are they abandoned on tenement stoops?
or do they grasp the steel bars of state penitentiaries?
do they escape on a junkie's nod?
or do they become the mad ravings of a lunatic?
or maybe all that's left are the tear stains on the blouse on grandma's bosom.
And maybe this Sunday the gods' will have heard one too many verses
of "We Shall Overcome"
and the choir shall lose their voices
and all those who have been faithful and paid their ties
shall be refunded
and we will begin to look somewhere else for help.

by Samuel Robertson



Fifteen Minutes by Andrea Dobrich

The Scar

I look into the mirror
I stand still and I stare
I look into the mirror
at the scar that I bear,
For I cannot help it
I was born this way
the scar that I carry
cannot go away.

I'm not only scarred on the surface,
but also skin deep.
I must live with this scar,
for the scar is me.

Some look upon me with disgust and hatred,
some a sorrowful eye,
but I am not ashamed,
for my scar I can't hide.

I know this is something I must live with,
until I live not anymore
but until then I bear the scar,
and for the scar I live for.

For this scar was passed on to me
from me to my child,
now he must wear it
bear it and be proud.

by Regina Anderson

In Spoon Fashion

I tried to reach you before I came.
You would not answer the call.
You know how I hate to
talk to machines.
Who knows who's listening in.
I'd rather love in secret dark.
Will you hang up my coat?
Or should I hold it,
hat in hand,
while you stand far in a corner?
Already fallen out of love-
You shake your head at my tears,
as I recite the beauty of
our spoon fashion joinings,
You nod knowingly, when I talk
of my destroyed
Piscean soul.
You don't want my dedication-
still your blood shot eyes tell
of your need of my affection.
No one loves as forever as I.
I whisper, I forgive you
of your sin.
Your stance relaxes as you
remove your blouse.
Shyly as guilt overcomes you,
You undress me.
And my water revitalizes
your earth
in spoon fashion joining.

by Oni Pendarvis

Time After Time

Coincidence is rarely innocent
wanting to believe
time after time
a phone rings
unanswered
at 4 in the morning
what's going on in the back of your mind
shatters the fragility of trust
it cannot be restored by roses,
apologies or
mere excuses
what hurts is not the lie itself
but the willingness to believe them.

Chance happens rarely without cause
wanting to believe
time after time
an incriminatory note left
on a small slip of paper
found in the pocket of his trousers
confirming what you already knew
tearful revelations don't excuse the betrayal
what amazes me is not the capacity to forgive
but our willingness to forget.

Love is almost always absent of reason
promising never to love again
time after time
we cannot change somebody else's behavior
we are only responsible for our own
and love often happens in spite of
instead of because
what scares me is not the question "why"
but the answer "why not?"

I tell you coincidence is rarely innocent
and chance happens rarely without cause
love is almost always absent of reason
and there will always be . . .
a next time.

by Samuel Robertson

Awaiting Another Love...

Your looks,
so ice cold...

Your words,
so cruel...

Your silence,
so painful...

Your Love,
lost somewhere...

My mistakes,
your tears...

My friend,
your discomfort...

My Love,
you question it...

Your tender kisses still lingering,
awaiting another...

Your sweet scent,
still trapped in my heart...

Paralyzed by emotions,
I'm trapped in the game of Love...

Awaiting another heart beat...

Awaiting another salty tear...

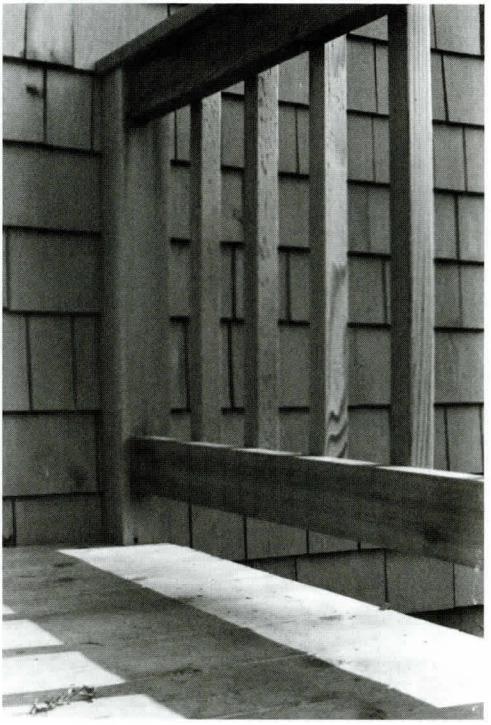
Awaiting another Love...

by Lyvette Velazquez

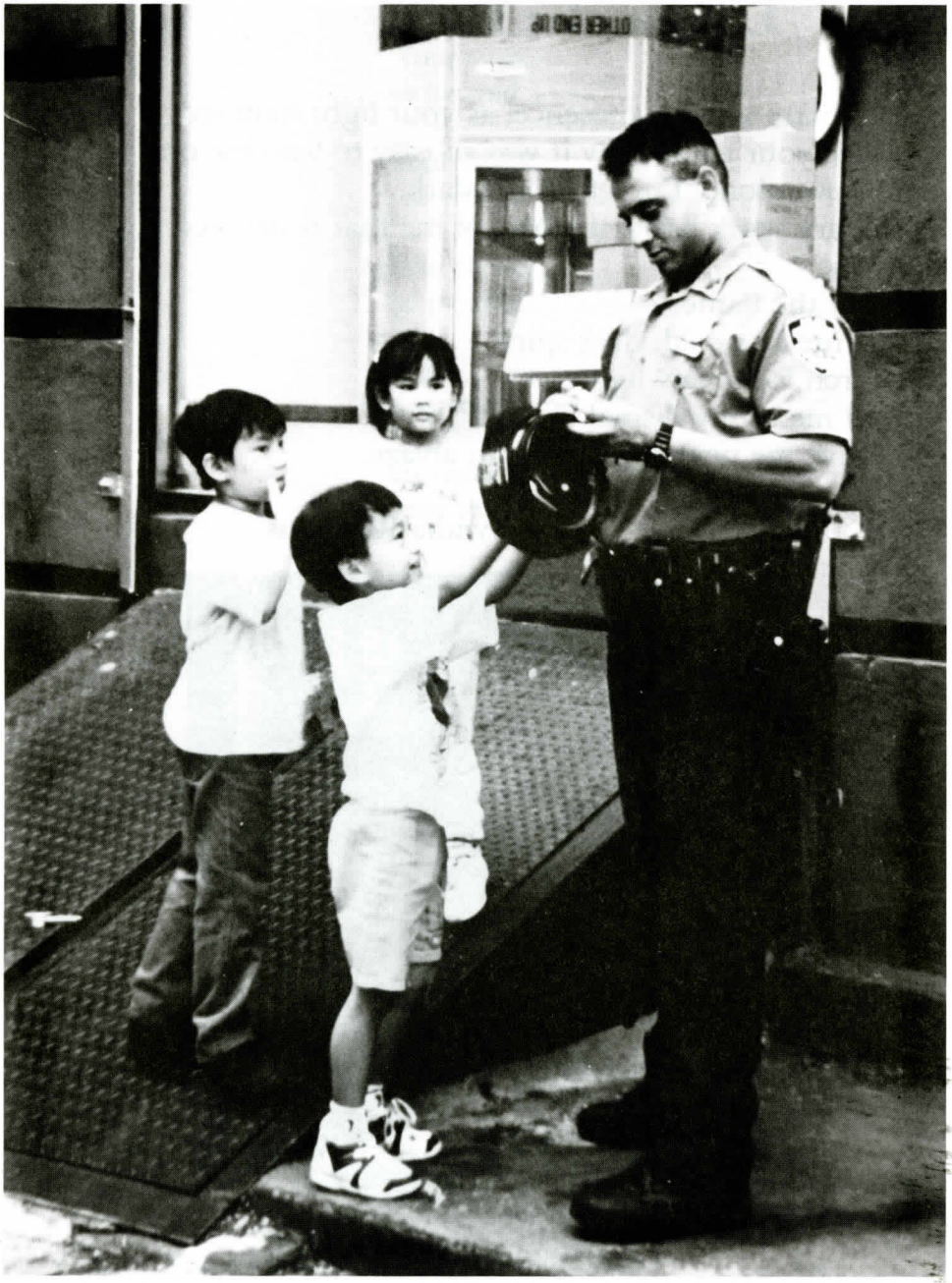
Lost in the Dark

I set a blaze in your presence, as your light dimmed.
I realize your game now it was so easy to lead me on.
And now, alone, I'm left in the dark.
A solitary spark lights the part of me that is devoted
To you.
Put out the flame.
Leave me as a cold, dark spirit
In search for a new light
To rid me of my dismal being
And give me new hope to again ablaze.

by Cyndia Romulus



Untitled by Meghan Gilroy



Policeman's Cap by Andrea Dobrich

My Heart

My heart sank with the sunset.
Yellow after gold after brown after red
whispered the secret autumn.

I bid adieu to my love affair with summer.
Touches of gentle sunlight, hinted fever
of heat, kisses from the warm ocean, the
sudden hugs of the cool soft grass. A
three month fascination- leaving to
hibernate in the womb of the earth and the
box of my memory.

Colors of change quickly took summers
place. Patterns of essence soon filled the
reflection in my eyes. Yet, behind this
time of color, winter does smile a look of
satisfaction.

Bare trees and white blanket will be the
painting of all window pictures. Awaiting
the sign that the growl of winter is on
its way out.

One morning, the drip-drop of a leaking
icicle will play the tune of spring again.
All shall wake from the heavy of winter
slumber-opening the shutter to greet the
smile of an old lover.

by Heather Blake

Prayers to Artemis

To whisper this, a sin against the Father Lord, against the God who has rooted me to this bed, rooted me to be raped into submission, into worship position. To raise a limb, to let a cry form, froth upon the lips, would only incur His wrath. So I lay, still and silent, only lifting myself to expel the shriveled fetus, emitted in clots.

Artemis, do not turn your face to me anger, you who have never understood what it is to be seduced with false images and virtuous words. Will you banish me for falling prey, as you did Callisto? You who have never been overpowered, seduced by promises, you who exalt in solitude know not what demons it holds for me. I asked God over for tea. He placed His fingers upon the cup. Cracks formed like veins.

Artemis, pare me down, let fall the whitish cream, which forms upon the skin, reveal the crescent bone. Unearth me, peel the crescent rind, fruit bitter, but still mine. Let your form rise, rise from the soil within me, putrid with rotting fruit and misshapen fetuses. Rise, your limbs taut with boundless energy, eyes burning . . .

The image fades and I am left in this room a shrine I have built to myself. A candle lit brings objects to silhouetted life. Objects, once portions of the darkness become distinct with a moonish glow. Exploring by touch, the gatherings of my travels: stones, their faces smoothed of harsh expression, their bodies tinted with sediment, long-necked bottles, blue-tinted hollows, burnt paper, curled, scrawled upon, tomes and tomes of evidence for existence, a wilderness of words.

Hunting within this wilderness, the self eludes capture. Artemis, if I had your skill, your precision, your strength, I would let fly an arrow. Swift and deadly, I'd easily fell the self. Existence proven by its expiration. I'd observe the clean wound, touch the skin, turn the palm upwards. Slowly rotting meat, I'd pull out my knife, choose the choice portions, feed the rest to the hounds. I suppose I would mount the head above my writing desk.

But I have forgotten, forgotten that I must be the hunted as well as the huntress. It should be my heart pierced, my breath evaporating in the air. My head severed, blood flowing. My heart bleeding upon the dinner plate, staked with toothpicks, served with cheese.

by Bushra Rehman

P's and O's

"Did you hear that the rates on the Madison account might double?"

Everyone who was present in the clique of conversationalists nodded, but with nothing to nod in agreement about. They seemed to be automated to do nothing except nod at any statement or request made in their presence. "I understand, Geoffrey, that the reason for the increase is that clients no longer care how much they spend on an account. Is that true?"

Attentively, I leaned in towards the center of the circle to hear a little more of the details. I did this not out of interest, but out of boredom.

Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a group of well-dressed women having a conversation by the bar. I decided to depart from my present company and gently patted my husband's arm. I politely nodded (but not in agreement) and excused myself from the circle. It tightened after I slid out.

Casually, I crossed over the square of four women and attempted to make another circle. Unfortunately, I had to listen from the outside until I could introduce myself into the conversation.

"From what I hear, that dress she wore was originally one of Elizabeth Taylor's. One of those that accidentally gets handed down to the wrong person by way of some silly mistake. I thought she looked dreadful in that green. Almost like a sick fish. . . "

"Oh, I thought she looked divine, very elegant."

"No one knows how to make a decent evening gown anymore. When I first married Charles, designers created art for women, now they create fancy tablecloths."

"Absolutely."

Naturally, I had no interest in this conversation either. I'm afraid they would have had a field day with my attire. Just

think of the comments they could make about a silk dress with velvet heels. Yawn.

I began to circle the room, traveling from one triangle to a square to a circle and then back to a triangle once more.

Then I saw him. His older gentleman stance didn't fit the usual stereotype of the business world executive. I wondered who had invited him and how he managed to seclude himself without looking the least bit self-conscious about it.

Trying to look as though I belonged there just as much as he did, I walked over and introduced myself to the gentleman.

"Good evening. I'm Raymond Bailey's wife, Paige. Have we met before?"

"Mrs. Bailey, how are you this evening? No, we haven't met before. I don't usually attend such fancy gathering. I just happened to be in town on business from London."

"This must seem a far cry from England."

"Actually, it's quite similar to tea time. You know, the idle chit-chat that takes place before the tea, or in this case, the meal is served." His presence was astounding.

"I'm afraid I didn't catch your name, sir."

"Well, it probably would have helped had I the manners to give it to you, Mrs. Bailey."

"Please, call me Paige."

"Very well. But only if you will call me Martin." He proceeded to extend a soft and gentle hand.

"Agreed. You said you are here on business from London. In what type of business are you involved?"

He smiled and laughed lightly. "It's not really a business. It's more of a hobby. It's hard to make a business out of thinking."

"Pardon me?"

"Thinking, my dear. I think a great deal. I've written a book about thinking. That is why I am here. Since

publishing firms are not that interested in books on thinking, I was brought here by a friend to try and persuade one of these wealthy gentleman to sponsor the publishing. However, this group strikes me as the non-thinking type." He gently tapped my arm as he let out a giggle.

"What do you think of ostriches, Paige?"

I looked at him for moment with the nagging suspicion that he was not all together there. "I haven't really given the matter much thought."

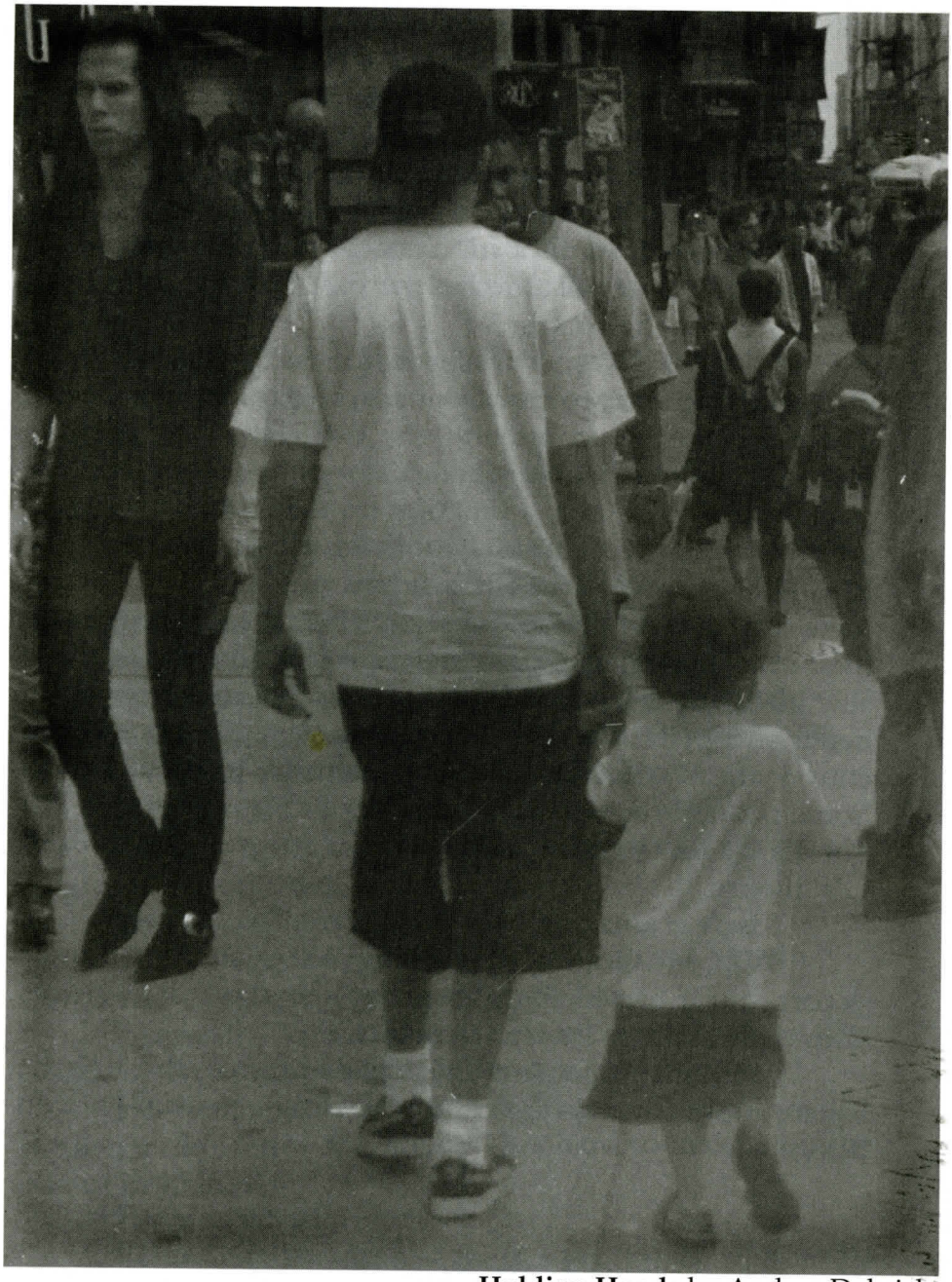
"Well, I have. Everyone in the world has been separated into two groups of animals, birds more specifically. There are the pheasants and the ostriches. You see, the pheasants are the people who are not only beautiful on the outside, but also serve a function on the inside. Pheasants are wonderful as an entree to eat from and receive energy to live. They are very clever birds and are quite difficult to catch. Take ostriches on the other hand. Their meat is tough and their intelligence isn't much better. Every time one of those silly birds sticks its head in the ground, its neck is open to being snapped. The only thing that they are good for is conversation. One can use their plumage to write letters. Some people are good for a number of things, some are just good for a few words. That, my dear Paige, is the 'P's and O's' theory."

"Isn't it amazing how people are like animals."

"Oh, Mr. Brandford is calling me over to him. I must depart, but it has been a pleasure to spend a few moments with a pheasant as lovely as yourself."

With that statement, I watched him cross through the square room towards the ostrich holding a martini with an olive.

by Jeannine Nault



Holding Hands by Andrea Dobrich

The moon her monthly round,
Still ending, still renewing
through mid-heaven
with borrowed light her
countenance transforms
Hence fills and empties,
to enlighten the earth

-John Milton

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20th Anniversary of Phoenix

For the past twenty years the members
of Phoenix have
published issue after issue of student and
faculty art and literary work.
After a fifth of a century, it is probably safe
to say that the next twenty will be as rich,
diverse, and expressionistic as
those in the past.
The editors of this edition of Phoenix would
like to thank the person, or persons, who
decided that students deserved a
showcase for their extraordinary
talents in art and literature.
Thank you.